

Message Text

SECRET

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72-60

ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-06 ISO-00 SS-07 AID-01 NSC-06 RSC-01 DRC-01

AS-01 /027 W

----- 106490

R 111547Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5444

INFO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

S E C R E T ATHENS 6637

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR US

SUBJ: CODEL ROSENTHAL

1. I MET WITH CONGRESSMAN ROSENTHAL LAST NIGHT TO GIVE HIM SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ON GREEK SITUATION IN RELATION TO CYPRUS. HIS PARTICULAR INTEREST SEEMED TO BE IN KNOWING WHAT WE HAD DONE TO TRY TO KEEP CRISIS FROM DEVELOPING AS IT HAD AND WHAT NOW COULD BE DONE. I GAVE HIM MY PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE CRISIS AS I HAD SEEN THEM FROM HERE. INEVITABLY MY FOCUS WAS UNFAVORABLE TO TURKEY. HE ASKED ME WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DONE TO PREVENT THE CRISIS. I EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WITH PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY UNDER LONDON-ZURICH AGREEMENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE IMAGINATIVE IN APPLYING ITS PROVISIONS. I ADDED THAT I FELT US COULD HAVE PUT MORE PRESSURE ON TURKEY IN THE EARLY STAGES, BUT CAUTIONED THAT THIS WAS JUST MY IMPRESSION FROM ATHENS, WHICH CLEARLY ONLY FORMED ONE PIECE OF A COMPLICATED PICTURE. IN REPLY TO HIS QUESTION WHY TURKEY HAD ACTED "SO IRRESPONSIBLY", I SAID THIS QUESTION WAS NOT ONE I COULD ANSWER AND THAT PERHAPS DEPARTMENT AND ANKARA COULD SHED LIGHT ON THIS.

3. CONGRESSMAN ROSENTHAL ALSO DELVED TO SOME EXTENT INTO HISTORY OF GREEK DICTATORSHIP AND OUR POLICY TOWARD IT. I EXPLAINED THAT OUR SECURITY INTERESTS HAD DOMINATED OUR POLICY, NOTING THAT AS EARLY AS NOVEMBER 1969 THE NSC

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HAD DECIDED TO RESUME MILITARY AID ON THAT GROUND. I

MENTIONED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STRONG EMPHASIS ON FACT THAT OUR DIPLOMACY COULD NOT BE TIED TO DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. I TOOK THE OCCASION OF OUR CONVERSATION TO EXPRESS REGRET AT TENDENCY TO SHIFT RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNPOPULAR POLICIES TO AMBASSADORS. HAVING SERVED NOW UNDER SEVEN PRESIDENTS OVER A PERIOD OF MANY YEARS, AND WITH DIRECT APPOINTMENTS FROM FOUR, I TOLD ROSENTHAL THAT I FOUND IT PARTICULARLY UNACCEPTABLE TO BE SADDLED PUBLICLY WITH ONUS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR GREEK POLICIES OVER PAST YEARS. I UNDERLINED THAT EXPOSING AMBASSADORS IN THIS WAY COULD PLACE IN INCREASING JEOPARDY THEIR VERY LIVES ABROAD AS TRAGIC DEATH OF RODGER DAVIES HAD ALREADY SHOWN.

5. ON THE BASIS OF THIS DISCUSSION I JUDGE WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR AN IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION OF U.S. POSTURE DURING CYPRUS CRISIS. CONGRESSMAN ROSENTHAL IS ENGAGING HERE IN EXTENSIVE ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH MANY GREEKS, INCLUDING PRESENT GREEK LEADERSHIP. HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY COME AWAY WITH A VERY SHARP PICTURE OF CRITICAL GREEK PERCEPTION OF THE U.S. ROLE DURING THE CRISIS. FRANKLY, THE ONLY REMEDY I SEE AT THIS TIME IS ACTION TO GET THE TURKS UNILATERALLY TO MAKE EARLY CONCESSION ON REFUGEES AND ONE OR MORE MEANINGFUL STEPS TOWARD WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESENT POSITION. OTHERWISE, AS FAR AS CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS TURKEY ARE CONCERNED, IT LOOKS DOWNHILL TO ME, WITH ALL THIS IMPLIES FOR OUR VITAL INTERESTS IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, CODELS, MEETINGS, AMBASSADORS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATHENS06637
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740254-0011
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740957/aaaabwja.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <12 MAR 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL ROSENTHAL
TAGS: PFOR, OREP, GR, US, (ROSENTHAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005